



Devoted: The Story of a Father's Love for His Son

Dick Hoyt

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The remarkable story of a father's devotion to his wheelchair-bound son and how their bond inspired millions of people worldwide.

Born a spastic quadraplegic, Rick Hoyt was written off by numerous doctors. They advised his parents, Dick and Judy, to put their firstborn son in an institution. But Rick's parents refused. Determined to give their son every opportunity that "normal" kids had, they made sure to include Rick in everything they did, especially with their other two sons, Rob and Russ.

But home was one thing, the world at large, another. Repeatedly rebuffed by school administrators who resisted their attempts to enroll Rick in school, Rick's mother worked tirelessly to help pass a landmark bill, Chapter 766, the first special-education reform law in the country. As a result, Rick and other physically disabled kids were able to attend public school in Massachusetts.

But how would Rick communicate when he couldn't talk? To overcome this daunting obstacle, Dick and Judy worked with Dr. William Crochetiere, then chairman of the engineering department at Tufts University, and several enterprising graduate students, including Rick Foulds, to create the Tufts Interactive Communication device (TCI). In the Hoyt household, it became known as the "Hope machine," as it enabled Rick to create sentences by pressing his head against a metal bar. For the first time ever, Rick was able to communicate.

Then one day Rick asked his dad to enter a charity race, but there was a twist. Rick wanted to run too. Dick had never run a race before, but more challenging still, he would have to push his son's wheelchair at the same time. But once again, the Hoyts were determined to overcome whatever obstacle was put in their way.

Now, over one thousand races later, including numerous marathons and triathlons, Dick Hoyt continues to push Rick's wheelchair. Affectionately known worldwide as Team Hoyt, they are as devoted as ever, continuing to inspire millions and embodying their trademark motto of "Yes, you can."

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